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ABSTRACT

This guide outlines the foundation for campus ministry in the context of definition, community, and mission. It considers the functioning of ministry at the center of the Catholic identity of a school in contrast to a position conceived in terms of projects and events. It begins with a description of campus ministry coming of age as schools work to address the many areas and needs of faith and adolescent development. The second section is about the praxis of campus ministry, considering pastoral praxis, spiritual praxis, liturgical praxis, and social praxis. An appendix includes a copy of "The National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-first Century, 1991." (Contains 65 endnotes and 54 references.) (RJC)

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# CAMPUS MINISTRY: IDENTITY, MISSION AND PRAXIS

BY CARMEN NANKO, DMIN

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# Table of Contents


| Page | | |
|---|---|---|
| v | Preface | |
| viii | About the Author | |
| ix | Acknowledgements | |
| 1 | Introduction | |
| 3 | **Section I:** | **Foundations** |
| 5 | Chapter 1 | Identity<br>Campus Minister as...<br>School as Community |
| 11 | Chapter 2 | Mission<br>Youth<br>Education<br>Charism<br>Church<br>Community |
| 17 | **Section II:** | **Praxis** |
| 19 | Chapter 3 | Pastoral Praxis<br>Care<br>Counseling<br>Presence<br>Limitations<br>A Pastoral Response |




4

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | Chapter 4 | Spiritual Praxis<br>Prayer<br>Reflection |
| 33 | Chapter 5 | Liturgical Praxis<br>Celebration of the Sacraments<br>Other Ritual Expressions<br>Sacred Space<br>The Power of Ritual |
| 43 | Chapter 6 | Social Praxis<br>Task<br>Criteria for Social Ministry<br>A Community of Praxis |
| 53 | Conclusion | |
| 57 | Endnotes | |
| 63 | Reflection Questions | |
| 67 | Bibliography | |
| 71 | Appendix A: The National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-first Century, 1991 | |

# PREFACE

...proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince...and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching...do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.
*2 Timothy 2-3*

*Why, what* and *whether* are often heard antecedents of the words campus ministry. *Why* should campus ministry be a mainstream component of Catholic education? *What* is campus ministry; does it yield to definition? How do we determine *whether* campus ministry is an essential functional component of community and identity? Each of these questions is worthy of reflection and conversation by school communities as well as with and among those called to campus ministry.

Catholic schools draw their life from the heart of the Church, the body of Christ. Catholic schools are born of, supported by and give life to the Catholic community. This reality coupled with the *Catholic Identity Belief and Directional Statements* heralded at the conclusion of **The National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st Century** (cf. Appendix A) provides the context for this thoughtful and foundational treatment of the nature and practice of campus ministry. Whatever our formal or anecdotal experience of campus ministry, it surely finds a home in belief and directional statements that profess we should:

- welcome and support diverse populations as a hallmark of Catholic identity,
- challenge all members of the community to witness to their belief in Jesus Christ,

- guarantee on-going spiritual formation,
- proclaim the Gospel,
- celebrate through worship and service,
- integrate thinking and believing in ways that encourage intellectual growth,
- nurture faith and inspire action, and
- create a climate and culture rich in belief, tradition and sacramental life.

It is in this context that Dr. Carmen Nanko framed this text. She first developed her vision in a presentation at the 1995 conference for Catholic high school religion teachers and campus ministers co-sponsored by NCEA's Secondary Schools Department and Department of Religious Education and the University of Dayton. During this conference the patterns and possibilities defining the foundation and many expressions of campus ministry were examined and explored, in addition to other areas of curriculum and instruction in religious education.

*Campus Ministry: Identity, Mission and Praxis* captures and extends the established place of campus ministry in Catholic education. Dr. Nanko makes a significant contribution to the field by laying out carefully the foundation for campus ministry in the context of definition, community and mission. It is a serious consideration of a ministry functioning at the center of the Catholic identity of a school in contrast to a position conceived in terms of projects and events. Dr. Nanko first guides us through a thoughtful description of campus ministry coming of age as schools work to address the many areas and needs of faith and adolescent development. It is on this carefully crafted foundation that the second section about the praxis of campus ministry is built. How does campus ministry, and how do campus ministers, shape and respond to the many pastoral, spiritual, liturgical and social needs of their school communities? What are the core considerations in each area?

The following pages initiate but do not conclude the exploration of this subject. The author and editor have framed several questions that may be helpful for campus ministers, for those preparing for this role as well as for the leaders of school communities. These questions will draw the reflection and conversation down from the global to the backyard where life and faith are lived.

In conclusion we return to the wonderful words of Timothy "...proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince...and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching...do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully." You can see him speaking to a gathering of campus ministers. This is

their mission and this book is in support of their preparation, reflection and practice.

Mary Frances Taymans, SND, EdD
Editor and Associate Executive Director
NCEA Secondary Schools Department

# About the Author

Dr. Carmen Nanko, DMin, is currently a campus minister and a member of the religious studies faculty at DeMatha Catholic High School, Hyattsville, Maryland. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in theology and ministry from The Catholic University of America. Dr. Nanko is professionally active in the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). She has presented, written and served as a counselor on a variety of topics in ministry, secondary education and social justice, and has worked with the AntiDefamation League in Washington, DC on issues of Jewish-Christian relations as they pertain to Catholic schools. Proficient in sign language, she has served The Catholic University, the Archdiocese of Washington, the Military Archdiocese of the United States, and others, as an interpreter for liturgical and ceremonial celebrations. *Campus Ministry: Identity, Mission and Praxis* is the result of Dr. Nanko's participation at NCEA's 1995 conference for high school campus ministers and religion department chairpersons held at the University of Dayton.

# Acknowledgements

Ministry is always a collaborative venture, fueled by the gifts, time and energy of an extensive community; nurtured by the encouragement and support of family and friends. This work represents the collective efforts of many who are owed a debt of gratitude.

Thanks must first be expressed to the DeMatha Catholic High School community: faculty colleagues, staff and administration; alumni; parents; but especially the students who make it all possible and worthwhile.

The editorial labors of Mary Frances Taymans, SND and Tracy Hartzler-Toon, both of the National Catholic Educational Association, and Rev. Lucien Longtin, SJ, department chairperson of religious studies, Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC, have been instrumental in enabling this project to grow from a presentation into a publication. The competent critiques provided by Rev. Paul Lauzon, principal at Columbus High School, Marshfield, Wisconsin; Lars Lund, religion department chairperson at Junipero Serra High School, Modesto, California; and in particular, Rev. John Tuohey, PhD, corporate ethicist at Mercy Healthcare System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; have contributed to the literary, pastoral and theological integrity of this work.

I am grateful to the following individuals for sharing their stories, ministerial experiences and professional expertise from a variety of fields: Peter Antoci, Peter Conaty, Norman Cooper, Stan DeBoe, Herb Green, Richard Guastella, Clare Treichel and my colleagues who participated in

the 1995 NCEA conference for high school campus ministers and religion department chairpersons, held at the University of Dayton, Ohio. In this technological age I would have been lost if not for the cooperation of Richard Lang, who lent his computer skills.

As a product of Catholic education I am privileged to have been influenced by the outstanding faculties of Santa Maria Parish School and Cardinal Spellman High School, both of the Bronx, New York and The Catholic University of America, in Washington, DC. My writing, teaching and ministry reflect the influences of Sr. Deborah Lopez; Sr. Veronica Liegey; Rev. Thomas Gilleece; Rev. Robert Poveromo; Rev. Carl Peter, STD, PhD; Rev. Douglas Morrison, DMin; and Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, PhD.

The confidence and continued supportive presence of family and friends should never be underestimated. I am happily indebted to Carmen and Charles Nanko; Mary Louise, Robert, Bobby and especially Danielle Cardosa; Chip and Karen Nanko; Anita Nanko and Peter Reagan; Connie Fernandez; Ed and Joann Dobransky. The members of the Catholic community at Fort McNair, in particular Dennis Reimer, as well as William Cenkner, Mary Dancy and Marie Vignali of Catholic University have remained a steady source of encouragement and wisdom. Finally, words could never adequately express my appreciation for Paul Antic and his valuable insights, patient proof reading and faithful friendship.

To all who teach through their ministry and minister through their teaching, thanks.

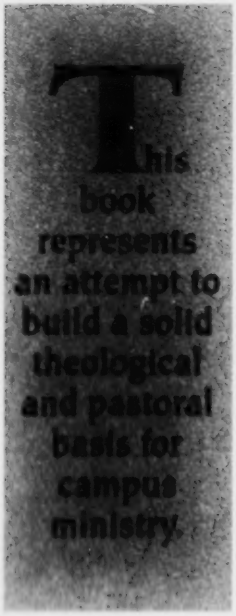
Carmen Nanko, DMin

# INTRODUCTION

ampus ministry in the Catholic secondary school is the new kid on the pastoral block. Having gained prevalence in high schools across the nation over the past decade, the ministry now faces its metaphorical adolescence with the questions, crises and challenges that accompany growth. As campus ministry comes of age, anecdotal evidence indicates that it is time to address foundational issues in order to preserve the integrity and insure the future of this unique apostolate.

With an eagerness characteristic of youth, campus ministry emerged on the school scene. Priority was often given to programs, such as retreats, community service and liturgy planning. While a focus on activity initially generates excitement, the long term survival of any ministry requires a grounded sense of identity and mission and a coherent sense of purpose to avoid ambiguity. Currently, campus ministry, as a distinctive element of secondary schools, is experiencing a crisis of identity. The lack of a univocal definition or a universally recognized name illustrates the need for reflection on the nature of this ministry. Further, the apparent ease with which the ministry can be created in the image of a particular campus minister in a given school, and reinvented with the advent of each ensuing minister, invites and encourages a look at clarity of mission.

As campus ministry increasingly becomes an integral part of a Catho-




lic secondary education, framing the dialogue becomes inevitable if the apostolate is to achieve stability and reach maturity. So, Section I seeks to lay the foundations for a discussion of campus ministry in the high school. This is accomplished in Chapter 1 by affirming the campus minister's identity as a minister and the school's identity as a community. Since identity is realized in and through mission, Chapter 2 articulates the purpose and context of a ministry that brings together elements of school and church.

Identity and mission are neither grasped nor lived in a vacuum. Their engagement with concrete reality requires translation into praxis, that is, a informed living. So, in Section II, Chapters 3 through 6 identify four elements that must characterize praxis if it is to reflect continuity within Catholic tradition as well as the flexibility to address complexities of the human condition.

This work does not intend to espouse any particular model for campus ministry nor is it intended as a manual for designing and implementing programs. It does not presume an expertise arising from experience with a successful program nor are its considerations contingent upon the existence of an ideal school situation. Rather this book represents an attempt to build a solid theological and pastoral basis for campus ministry. Such grounding is necessary if campus ministers and school communities are to develop criteria for evaluating extant programs and forming new ones.

It should be noted that the use of the term campus ministry does not imply preference for any particular model, it is equally applicable to individual or team efforts. Campus minister is employed generically, referring to all individuals, lay, religious or clergy, that fulfill a ministerial role within a school.

# Section I: Foundations

Identity and mission provide a foundation for ministry. A rooted sense of self and purpose are necessary if those who serve are to experience campus ministry as connected to the work of the universal church. Common ground sets direction for praxis, yet leaves the practical details and nature of expression to the individual communities and their campus ministers.

# Chapter 1: Identity

Theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz writes

> To name oneself is one of the most powerful acts a person can do. A name is not just a word by which one is identified. A name also provides the conceptual framework, the point of reference, the mental constructs that are used in thinking, understanding, and relating to a person, an idea, a movement.[1]

This insight that identity and self-naming bear theological and pastoral significance can prove useful in establishing a foundation for campus ministry.

## Campus Minister as...

### *Minister*

If a name creates a conceptual and relational framework for identity, then campus ministers currently suffer an identity crisis. While campus ministers are called ministers, they are often viewed as adjunct. The common association of the term with ordained ministry coupled with its trivialization due to overuse, further complicates the situation and results in a confusion that affects those who serve and the communities served. If campus ministers are to be ministers, then they need to come

to an acceptance and appreciation of their identity without qualification or apology. Once identity is understood, campus ministers can claim the name of minister as their own. But, this appropriation necessitates a clear articulation of the meaning and role of campus minister.

### *Individual*

To be a campus minister is to be a unique, gifted yet limited individual. Each person brings to the ministry a particular personality, perspective and experience. Theologian Jeanette Rodriguez notes that one's experience is "really a synthesis of experiences which are part and parcel of one's totality in a given moment. It entails a psychosocial history that impacts us whether we are conscious of it or not."[2] While individuals may share elements in common, ultimately context and interpretation effect variety and insure uniqueness. For example, a campus minister's personal gifts, spirituality, education and family experiences will both influence, and hopefully enrich, one's expression in ministry.

Ministry is enhanced by the talents of those who serve. Each campus minister brings gifts to the endeavor, and other gifts are discovered in the process of serving. Creativity, practical aptitude, communication and relational skills are necessary for effective ministry; however an individual may be more gifted in some areas than in others. To be minister is not to be all things to all peoples; it is to appreciate that certain tasks may demand a facility, competence, experience or training that one does not possess and may never possess. In other words to be minister is to accept the finitude of the human condition; it is to accept one's limitations.

Though inherent to creation, limitations need not be an impediment to ministry. Limitations hinder ministry when individuals choose not to recognize and accept them. Acknowledging one's limitations, frees the campus minister to invite others to place their gifts in service to the community. To be minister is to develop a comfortable yet challenging relationship with the self, a relationship grounded in an understanding and appreciation of personal uniqueness, gifts and limits.

### *Pastoral Presences*

Campus ministry is fundamentally pastoral. The campus minister is called to be comforter, preserver, enabler and mender of breaches (Isaiah 58:12); to be preacher, prophet, and pilgrim; to be grounded in theological competence.

Pastoral presence calls for engagement in the daily labor of church, dealing on a practical level with a faith community. This presence provides a service that entails listening, drying tears, holding hands, offer-

ing support and encouragement. It carries the responsibility to proclaim the Word with voice, hand, heart and life. The campus minister often challenges, at times calling an individual or a community to task, inviting people to participate in the compassion of God by entering into solidarity with suffering creation.[2] It exists as an opportunity to communicate the tradition and empower others to claim that tradition as their own. Symbolized as a journey with a community, the presence of the campus minister holds the promise of learning with and from one's traveling companions.

Fidelity to the identity of minister, accountability to the community and effective communication of the tradition require competence rooted in facility with Scripture and tradition, practical training, the study of theology and theological reflection. In other words, to be minister is to be pastoral theologian. This equation should not surprise since every Christian practices theology to some degree. "The effort to understand one's ultimate faith stance and to translate it more effectively into action is a rudimentary form of theology."[4]

**To be minister is to develop a comfortable yet challenging relationship with theology, a relationship cognizant of the interdependence between pastoral activity and theological study.**

As pastoral theologian, the campus minister bears a public responsibility that deserves an articulation and witness rooted in competence. Competence in campus ministers demonstrates respect for the community. As James and Evelyn Whitehead observed, "many ministers begin their pastoral work with neither the skills nor the confidence to explore the theological import of their ongoing ministerial experience. Thus, intimidated by theology as a discipline and untrained in methods for experience-based learning, campus ministers enshrine this learning disfunction in their practice of ministry."[5]

To be minister is to develop a comfortable yet challenging relationship with theology, a relationship cognizant of the interdependence between pastoral activity and theological study. Theology is meant to be in service to the living of the gospel, for it is in living and in reflection on living that theology is formed and informed by the campus minister and the faith community.

*Professional*

To be minister is to be a professional. Ministry is a profession with expectations, standards, responsibilities and limitations. Professionalism in ministry, as in any vocation, requires collaboration with professionals in other fields. Effective pastoral activity necessitates an awareness of available resources as well as the development of a network of experts from community, academia and church with whom the campus minister can consult. Furthermore, professionalism presumes the confidence to make referrals when the campus minister is confronted with situations that exceed the limits of personal competence.

As members of an academic community, campus ministers find themselves in the unique position of being about and in the business of education. If campus ministry is to be an integral part of school life, the minister needs to cultivate working relationships with colleagues in the school's faculty, staff and administration. For example, the nature of campus ministry, particularly in secondary schools, necessitates collaboration with departments that handle religious studies, music, art, counseling, discipline and even development, as well as the support of staff responsible for scheduling, maintenance, cafeteria and secretarial support. As colleague, a campus minister needs to be visible and inclusive, inviting those who share the school's educational and Catholic mission to lend their gifts and experience.

Campus ministry is an interdisciplinary enterprise that needs the cooperation of professionals with expertise in fields ranging from social sciences to liturgy and depends on an awareness of resources providing services as disparate as soup kitchens and health care clinics. As a professional, a campus minister strives:

- to become comfortable with consultation,
- to realize that pastoral competence does not require personal expertise in all areas, and
- to recognize that individual limitations need not diminish the quality of service rendered to the faith community.

*Teacher*

To be minister is to be teacher. Ministry carries a didactic dimension by virtue of the responsibility to transmit tradition. This dynamic tradition's communication is neither bound to a classroom nor exhausted by a catechism. Grounded by the example of the quintessential teacher, who proclaimed the word yet bent low to wash the feet of his first students, it is a tradition most powerfully conveyed through living. All are teachers in a Catholic school, whether maintenance personnel or princi-

pal, campus minister or student.

While a position in campus ministry should not be conditioned by an obligation to teach in the classroom, the two need not be mutually exclusive. In an academic setting there are advantages to the presence of the campus minister in a classroom. The opportunity provides a point of initial contact with students, yet keeps the campus minister in touch with the reality of the faculty. This shared experience lends a degree of credibility and enables the development of collegial relationships.

**While a position in campus ministry should not be conditioned by an obligation to teach in the classroom, the two need not be mutually exclusive.**

To be minister as teacher is to be comfortable with and challenged by the mission of Catholic education. This means maintaining a healthy respect for what goes on in the classroom. At times, it entails putting aside one's fears and daring to try a hand at teaching. At other times, it requires the wisdom to discern whether the classroom falls within one's range of personal talent. However, as educators in a Catholic environment, all are called to heed the words of Jesus:

> You call me teacher. . . and you are right for that is what I am. So, if I, your teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. *John 13:13-15*

If the campus minister serves as pastor and teacher with individual gifts, limitations and a professional outlook, one's service is rendered within the milieu of the school. It is important, therefore, for the campus minister to grasp the nature of that institution.

## School as Community

At any given moment, a school is a dynamic intersection of past, present and future. It is a trans-generational enterprise serving as a repository of its own history and tradition, as well as that of the Church and the community it serves. It also represents an openness to possibilities. A Catholic school, in particular, represents a labor built on love and nurtured by faith to house hope. As a community, its members include stu-

**The identity of the campus minister is to be understood and defined in the context of community.**

dents, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, guardians, alumni, benefactors and their collective families.

Numerous factors interact to shape the identity of a given school, yet no two school communities are identical as each school's affiliation impacts its character. A school's relationship to a diocese, parish and/or religious order and the duration of that association shape institutional identity. Each school serves a population that may or may not remain consistent. The size of the community and the age, gender, socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds of the population are factors that influence identity. School location and the areas from which the school draws its population function as sources and challenges to identity. Of particular concern to a Catholic school is the denominational affiliation of its members. Addressing this matter requires ecumenical sensitivity without compromising Catholic identity.

Charism, story and spirit further constitute and distinguish identity. These elements animate, remember, regale, celebrate and sustain a corporate sense of self. These dynamic ingredients are essential to the revitalization and reformation of both institutional identity and purpose.

The identity of the campus minister is to be understood and defined in the context of community. A school is a community, and a Catholic school is a community of choice. Those who work, study or pay the bills choose to belong, and, as with any community, hopefully they share common values. Each school has its own ethos, needs, characteristics, strengths, limitations and history. Therefore, in order to be effective, the campus minister bears the responsibility to learn and respect the community's history and culture.

All that has been written about identity is valued only in the context of mission; that is, the reason for the school community's existence.

# Chapter 2:
# Mission

ission furnishes meaning, purpose, direction and focus for praxis. By its nature, the mission of campus ministry embodies a commitment to youth, education, charism, church and community.

## Youth

The task of campus ministry is to serve the young, in doing so the campus minister cares for tomorrow. As Pope John Paul II has written

> ...the church sees her path toward the future in the youth, beholding in them a reflection of herself. Youth must not simply be considered as an object of pastoral concern. Young people are and ought to be encouraged to be active on behalf of the church as leading characters in evangelization and participants in the renewal of society."[9]

The magnitude of this charge underscores a campus minister's obligation to recognize the talents, nurture the creativity, encourage the ideas, respect the power and implement the energy of the young. The campus minister must believe that youth are vital to the life and growth of community, church and world. This confidence must be imparted to the young by enabling and allowing them to assume responsibility for their mission; a mission that bears the mandate to make a difference. It is a

**If a school calls itself "Catholic," then campus ministry must be integral to its mission not an appendage consigned to the periphery.**

difference actualized by:

- treating all justly,
- providing a voice for the voiceless,
- exhibiting peace through language and action,
- sharing time, talent and resources,
- befriending the lonely and alienated,
- bringing reconciliation and healing to conflict, and
- respecting and valuing diversity.[7]

Care in a community of young people requires sensitivity to varying levels of emotional, physical, intellectual, moral, psycho-social and faith development. Adolescence is a time of great potential, yet subject to substantial risk. Those who work with adolescents need to be aware that it is a life stage fraught with change, including but not limited to, "pubertal development, social role redefinitions, cognitive development, school transitions, and the emergence of sexuality."[8] Accordingly, it is incumbent upon campus ministers to be cognizant of the pressures, temptations, stresses and challenges that young people endure today. In deference to these experiences, prudent ministers avoid tendencies to minimalize, generalize, sermonize or proselytize. The mission with and to youth must be rooted in a fundamental respect for their dignity and an appreciation for their inherent worth individually and collectively.

## Education

Dr. Thomas Groome, author and professor of education at Boston College, notes that education is essentially a political activity shaping "how people respond to the deepest questions about what it means to be human, how to participate with others in the world, and the kind of future to create together out of their past and present."[9] Campus ministry participates in this mission of Catholic schools. If a school calls itself "Catholic," then campus ministry must be integral to its mission not an appendage consigned to the periphery.

An environment conducive to spiritual growth is fundamental to the mission of a Catholic school. This entails creating an atmosphere where

individuals are encouraged to explore, develop and deepen their personal relationships with God, neighbor, creation and self, as well as discover the personal and social implications of those relationships. Furthermore, a distinctively Catholic identity presumes the provision of opportunities to experience and celebrate God's love in word, deed and sacrament. Ultimately, campus ministry serves to add a dynamic and lived aspect to faith, which complements and integrates the religious studies curriculum. Such collaboration manifests an abiding respect for the intellect, "which is the playing field of our lives as teachers, is the unavoidable arbiter of the faith message...Catholic education's whole purpose is to integrate faith and reason."[10]

## Charism

Some Catholic schools, by virtue of either association with a religious order or a condition of their founding, are endowed with a particular charism. The values, purpose and vision that render one order or school distinctive from another deserve a privileged position in the exercise of campus ministry.

Charism sets the tenor for mission. Within the context of academic institutions, charism should stand as an invitation to the greater community of lay faculty, administration and staff as well as students. In an age marked by a significant decrease in vocations to religious life, there exists a need to employ creative and alternate means of perpetuating a community's mission. A religious community's presence in a school enables the cultivation of a lay population literate in the tradition and empathetic with the apostolate of a given religious community. Identification occurs only when the invitation is extended to share actively in the vision, to become part of the story, to claim the mission.

The pervasive power of charism is illustrated by an example drawn from an all-male, community-sponsored Catholic secondary school. The order's founding charism dates back to the Crusades, and while it has undergone centuries of reinterpretation, it remains fundamentally unchanged: redemptive charity enacted in the ransoming of those held captive by enslaving conditions. Through the combined efforts of the religious and the campus minister, students were exposed to the mission of the community through celebration, story and the application of the charism in justice-oriented praxis.

The impact of this exposure was revealed one day in an unexpected manner. The captain of the school's Black history academic team was being interviewed by the press before a county-wide competition. A

**It can be through campus ministry that students are empowered to be church.**

reporter expressed interest in the simple scapulars which the team wore about their necks. The captain responded that it symbolized the school's namesake whose mission had been to ransom captives. He went on to explain that as young African American men, he and his teammates continued this work and through their studies they liberated those enslaved by ignorance.

The team's decision to wear the scapulars, uncovered accidentally in some forgotten closet, and the spontaneous response of the captain demonstrate the investment youth are willing to make if they are introduced to story, invited to participate in apostolate and allowed to claim both as their own. The appropriation of the mission by this student is all the more remarkable because he is a practicing Baptist. In his wisdom he discovered that charism transcends denominational allegiance. To belong to a community is to inherit both its gifts and the responsibilities these gifts entail.

## Church

Catholic schools form part of the saving mission of the church, nurtured and stimulated by its source, the Word of Christ, as expressed in scripture, tradition, liturgy, sacrament and through people past and present who bear witness with their lives.[11] Reality indicates that for too many students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, school is their only and sometimes first experience of church. This troubling revelation accentuates the need for campus ministry to facilitate the communication and appropriation of the tradition. It can be through campus ministry that students are empowered to be church. They are welcomed into the company of believers, charged with its mission, entrusted with its ritual and mystery.

Participation in a credal community grounded in a gospel faith makes possible the discernment of God in "the sound of the universe,"[12] in the Incarnation and in the neighbor most vulnerable. The appropriation of gospel as church demands taking a stand in the presence of the questions and inequities that define historical moments:

> It is to recognize the power of sin in oneself and in the world; it is to acknowledge the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation; it is to have hope that no evil, not even death, not even sin, is stronger or

> more certain than the power of God; it is to commit oneself to a love that reflects the love of God. . . it is to enter into a community where all this is believed, treasured, celebrated, and made the generative center of common commitments.[13]

As church, the Catholic school shares in the mission of evangelization, a mission whose accomplishment is aided by the presence and activity of campus ministry. Evangelization should not be confused with proselytism, which seeks to solicit converts and persuade others to abandon one set of beliefs in favor of another. To evangelize is to affirm through witness the hope that the Good News will indeed make all things new. It is to live as though God is truly the ground and goal of human life. The aim of evangelization is personal and collective transformation; a *metanoia* whereby values, incentives, lifestyles and criteria of judgment that are inconsistent with the word of God are recast in light of the gospel.[14]

## Community

A community centered in love, by its nature, seeks to extend beyond itself. At the heart of Catholic education is community, a reality taught as lived, with an implicit openness to the wider community.[15] Campus ministry plays an important role in calling the individual and the school to accept the obligations that participation in the greater community demands on local, national and global levels. Accepting this responsibility requires an appreciation of the difference personal and corporate praxis can make, as well as an understanding that in the face of evil and injustice any effort, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is not only necessary, but preferable to cowardly silence or indifference.

The mission of and to community is based in the fundamental dignity of the human person, created in the image of the divine. Respect for this dignity is realized when one identifies with the other, especially when the other is different, hurting, voiceless, unlovable, untouchable, stranger, broken. Bishop Ramirez described

> ...these are the totally other, the poor, the helpless and hopeless, those who shock me to my stomach, who make my heart bleed, whose misery moves my total being. In Spanish we use the word *conmover* which carries the implication that I am moved in a total way by the suffering other: emotionally, intellectually and behaviorally. *Estar conmovido* (to be totally moved) means that I must do something, do what I can, all that I can.[16]

Therein lies the commitment born of a community of faith: to do all that love makes possible, imbued with the hope that it will make a difference, if not today, tomorrow.

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Identity and mission are lived out in praxis. The integration of these components is necessary if action is rooted and has direction.

# SECTION II:
# PRAXIS

raxis encompasses action that both is formed by, and in turn, informs identity and mission. "For some, Christian praxis will mean, above all, explicitly religious activity—in the sacraments, liturgy, custom and religious convention. For others it will mean, first and foremost, involvement with the cause of the oppressed—participation in the social struggles of our times."[17] Campus ministers and communities need to recognize that all of these elements constitute praxis and are equally integral to living the faith. In the exercise of campus ministry four dimensions of activity emerge as essential to the integrity of identity and mission: pastoral praxis, spiritual praxis, liturgical praxis and social praxis.

# Chapter 3:
# Pastoral Praxis

Pastoral ministry encompasses care, counseling and presence. Productive pastoral activity is cultivated in a climate marked by hospitality and trust. The campus minister's ability to provide pastoral services depends on the community's perception of the office of campus ministry as a welcoming sanctuary where dignity is respected and confidences are honored.

## Care

Pastoral care is an ongoing process of accompaniment accomplished within a faith community. If it can be mindful of the developmental character of the human journey, such care functions to nurture, reconcile, guide, sustain and heal individuals and communities.[18]

Quality pastoral care bears certain characteristics. The capacity to offer care is proportionate to the campus minister's willingness to listen attentively. "Ministers so often think they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others; they forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking."[19] Care is not to be confused with problem-solving. As care-givers, campus ministers need to understand their role in terms of enabling the other to make choices, discover

**The capacity to offer care is proportionate to the campus minister's willingness to listen attentively.**

options, endure difficulties, discern direction, develop potential and restore that which has been lost or broken. As instruments of healing, campus ministers require patience because healing "is not an event but a direction—an enormously important goal that is never fully realized in our present experience."[20]

Pastoral care is the task of both campus minister and community. It is grounded in the discipleship of all Christians, called to live the gospel mandate by caring for others, especially the most vulnerable (Matthew 25:31-46), even when it is inconvenient (Luke 10:30-37) or most difficult (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27-35). Pastoral care is a response to the adventure of living that sometimes calls for empathy and other times facilitates change, yet it should always be centered in compassion and openness to mystery.

## Counseling

In the course of ministry, complex issues arise that are beyond the scope of simply caring. At these points, counseling, which serves a healing function, may prove necessary. Even in a school setting, the campus minister is often one of the first persons turned to in times of personal or communal crisis. The inclination to seek pastoral guidance is reinforced if the campus minister is perceived as welcoming, accessible and trustworthy.

Serious matters come to the attention of campus ministers in a variety of contexts: a pressing need precipitates contact by an individual or a community, a casual encounter or remark betrays a subtle indication of distress, a professional colleague requests a consultation that results in a collaborative effort. These ministerial opportunities may occur in the classroom, cafeteria, gymnasium, hallways, parking lot, faculty room, athletic field or library as readily as in the chapel or campus ministry office. Campus ministers need to sensitize themselves to hear cries for help, even in unexpected circumstances, from a wide range of individuals including students, co-workers and their respective families.

Taking into account the signs of the times, particular demographics and school location, campus ministers can learn to expect a broad spectrum of crises, dysfunctions, alienations, problems and surprises. Situ-

ations that invite pastoral response fall into three general categories:

- circumstances that affect an individual, e.g., pregnancy, divorce;
- circumstances that affect a community, e.g., violence, racial tension; and
- circumstances that affect an individual and impact the community, e.g., accident, death.

The breadth of issues typically encountered by campus ministers reflect the microcosmic nature of schools. Concerns that surface frequently revolve around health, sexuality, family, interpersonal relations, addictions, academics, finances, death, violence and the future. While some campus ministers are equipped to address a number of these topics adequately, the majority of the concerns are beyond the scope and competence of campus ministry and ministers alone.

**A campus minister does not have to be clinically trained in order to provide pastoral assistance in times of crisis.**

However, a campus minister does not have to be clinically trained in order to provide pastoral assistance in times of crisis. "Skill in the art of referral is indispensable in a minister's caring and counseling....It is a 'broadening' and 'sharing', not a total 'transfer' of responsibility."[21] A school is unique in so far as it contains a collection of professionals with competence in variant fields, coupled with access to resources, services and experts in the greater community. Used judiciously, this capability forms the basis for interprofessional cooperation that benefits the individual, the community and the campus minister. It is imperative that campus ministers network with other care-providers, especially counselors, within the school and the greater community.

## Presence

By providing means and opportunities for renewal and reconciliation, pastoral care and counseling strive to alleviate the brokenness that marks the human condition. These manifestations of pastoral praxis enable individuals and communities to address and grow through the developmental, relational, vocational, spiritual, transitional and accidental crises that characterize life's journey. However, when confronted with the

realities of human finitude, especially death, campus ministers learn that comfort, care, challenge and counseling cannot resolve everything. "Human beings may be consoled, and pour out every effort to heal and liberate, but suffering continues in history."[22] Standing at the very brink of trying situations, sometimes a campus minister's only appropriate response is to accept that there is nothing one can do except be with those who suffer.

Presence is the most difficult aspect of pastoral praxis because it demands that the minister relinquish control; it is predicated on a willingness to suffer with the other, to bear the rage of the hurt, to face questions without answers. To be present is to stand wordless with another in a moment of despair, to keep vigil in an hour of grief, to tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing, to face the reality of mutual powerlessness.[23] To be present is to be open to the possibility that a compassionate God chooses broken vessels as a means of touching those brought low by loss, pain, disappointment, defeat, grief, failure, despair, alienation and confusion. Paradoxically, through kenotic experience, or the emptying of self, one becomes more fully human. Once emptied of the self-interests and personal neediness, the campus minister is open to being in solidarity with the suffering other. In the process the campus minister comes to the realization that true pastoral presence serves to reveal the presence of God amidst the struggles of life.

Perhaps it comes as no surprise that critical moments in the passage of life are attended by religious ritual. Through ritual and prayer, pastoral presence enables individuals and communities to be accompanied in times of transition and crisis, to make sense out of that which makes no sense, to cry out with the possibility of being heard, to let go with the hope that there is more than eternal silence. Amidst the moments and events that try faith, exhaust hope and test the bounds of love, pastoral presence holds forth the promise that "If there be God, then there are parameters to evil, and a terminus. The human struggle can go forward in hard-won hope against hope that the compassion of God will overcome chaos and death and set limits even to the unfathomable mystery of evil."[24]

## Limitations

The sensitive nature of counseling and the unique role of a pastoral minister in an educational setting raise a distinct set of concerns regarding professional expectations, liabilities, parameters and behavior. Pastoral praxis is a human enterprise; campus ministers do not possess an

omni-competence denied all other helping professions. To be trusted by an individual or a community is a privilege that bears certain responsibilities but can also invite abuse if a campus minister chooses to ignore the limitations inherent in all human activities and relationships.

**Ministers must be aware of the professional expectations and legal liabilities associated with such a privilege.**

### *Confidentiality*

Confidences are sacred trusts that deserve protection. The principle of confidentiality maintains that personal information revealed within the context of certain professional or pastoral relationships should be protected from disclosure. Within the church, this is grounded canonically in the affirmation of a person's right to privacy.[25] However, confidentiality is bounded by the obligation to preserve the life, health and/or safety of the individual and/or the community. Furthermore, in dealing with minors, especially in an educational setting, the liabilities increase and vary by jurisdiction. "Very few states provide any sort of immunity or privilege for counselors or teachers performing counseling functions who receive confidential information from students....The educator does not enjoy the type of privilege that doctor/patient, lawyer/client, clergy/penitent, or husband/wife enjoy."[26]

As pastors, campus ministers are in the position to be trusted with the intimate confidences of the young. Ministers must be aware of the professional expectations and legal liabilities associated with such a privilege. It is incumbant on the campus minister to know the legal as well as social responsibilities that accompany adolescent disclosures. Cognizance is necessary not only to protect the campus minister and the community, but to insure the best possible care for the well-being of the individual.

### *Failure*

Sometimes campus ministers fail despite good intentions and heroic efforts: an at-risk student slips unnoticed through the cracks, a despondent individual ends life, a community refuses to address a fundamental inequity which creates division. There exist moments when individuals

or communities act in a manner detrimental to self and/or others. There are situations where a sense of hopelessness reigns "either because people seem incapable of genuinely receiving help or because their social circumstances seem irremediable."[27] Pastoral praxis is essentially about relationships, and there is always concern that the decision of whether or not to intervene be in the best interest of the persons concerned. But, problems do occur and some circumstances simply elude control; sometimes inculpable ignorance is a reality.

However, sometimes through self-centeredness, the campus minister neglects to act in the best interest of the individual. When the uniqueness of each individual and each situation is forgotten and the brokenness and weakness of the human condition ignored, the campus minister falls prey to the delusions of a messianic role. From the perspective of campus minister as messiah, failure can be personally devastating. To view the campus minister as human is to remember that "he/she is an imperfect instrument for communicating healing resources beyond her/himself."[28]

### *Vulnerability*

Pastoral praxis deals with fundamental life questions, and campus ministers are not immune from the chore of searching themselves for those answers. "To accept this truth at a deep level requires an inward surrender of subtle feelings of self-idolatry and spiritual superiority."[29] In order to be authentic and effective, ministers need to confront their own neediness with honesty. The act of confronting one's own neediness is a choice to become vulnerable. It requires the ability to access the emotional baggage or blindness one brings to certain people or issues encountered in ministry. Professional and personal integrity demands evaluating the degree of competence, depth of skill and capacity for objectivity necessary for a genuine pastoral response. Fairness to the other entails recognizing when a pastoral relationship is in danger of fostering dependence on or fulfilling the neediness of the campus minister. Accepting personal vulnerability means to risk being human and to embrace with equanimity weakness and strength, limitation and gift.

## A Pastoral Response

Care, counseling and presence are distinctive dimensions of pastoral praxis that often overlap and intersect. The interaction of these elements, as well as their limitations, are best illustrated when a school community faces the issue of death. With growing frequency, schools

are confronted with this reality through violence or illness, accident or suicide. As schools are generally associated with youth and its attendant vitality, death impacts the community in a profound way. While death and loss are ultimately common experiences, individuals are affected in varying degrees and respond in divergent ways.

An example of this is a high school that ended an academic year with the funeral of a junior killed in a traffic accident and began the next year with the cancer death of a much loved and respected guidance counselor. In the same semester, a staff member lost her spouse suddenly from heart disease, while another kept vigil as her husband's terminal illness reduced him to total dependence. A characteristically close-knit community, this school, overwhelmed with the bereavement of students and personnel, also found itself playing a major supportive role for the parents, families and spouses of those who had died.

**Care, counseling and presence are distinctive dimensions of pastoral praxis that often overlap and intersect.**

The collaborative response of campus ministry and community was manifest pastorally through care, counseling and presence. *Care* emerged in the form of visitations, assistance with funeral preparations, countless hours spent listening, drying tears and holding hands. The magnitude of the crisis required *counseling* and the school placed its resources and professionals at the disposal of the community. Opportunities were provided for those who needed to talk. At-risk individuals, especially students, were identified and supported. The services of a team from a local grief center were procured to enable faculty and staff to cope with the tragedies and to equip them to assist students through the grieving process. Campus ministers and members of the community lived *presence* as they stood in solidarity with those who suffered. Through personal contacts, prayers and rituals opportunity was given to voice memories, pain, confusion, anger and loss.

Even this apparently comprehensive pastoral response managed to be incomplete. Unintentionally, the needs and reactions of the newest members to the faculty, especially those who would replace the deceased, had been given only cursory attention. The oversight came to light at the end of the school year when a new faculty member confided feelings and frustrations to the campus minister.

The collective tragedies were not without impact on the campus min-

ister. Besides the professional stress brought on by providing pastoral services in an overwhelming series of tragic circumstances, the campus minister as an individual had to cope with the reality of death on a personal level. This was complicated by the fact that the lives lost were those of youth, colleagues and friends. Integrating these experiences was a process that required time and the support and skills of others outside the school community.

The very best of what it is to be human is found in coping with the limitations of life. Whether in the form of *care*, *counseling* or *presence*, such praxis is always in response to the finitude of the human condition and always reflects the nature of that condition.

# Chapter 4:
# Spiritual Praxis

In light of Catholic education's mission to foster the integration of faith and reason, spiritual ministry unfolds as an invitation to the heart to believe. For it is the heart which is "our hidden center...the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives....the place of truth, where we choose life or death....the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant."[30] Through spiritual ministry, a Catholic school invites the heart to embrace that which the intellect tackles in the classroom—the core of the faith. Consequently, it becomes the role of campus ministry to help the school's faculty, staff and administration to provide an atmosphere in which the human heart can grapple with, reflect on and attempt to articulate the mysteries of existence, meaning and transcendence. Through opportunities for prayer and reflection, campus ministry should enable the individual and community to explore the ramifications of the faith journey and respond to those stirrings of the heart which find satisfaction only in God.[31]

## Prayer

The prerequisite for prayer is the initiative of God's love; prayer "appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and ac-

tions, this drama engages the heart."[32] Prayer in Catholic schools is characterized by its ability to be public. The human response to divine initiative is central to the life of the community in a visible manner. Within this context, campus ministry plays a prominent leadership role.

When prayer is public, it is shared, with the campus minister acting and speaking on behalf of the people. Prayer is not the property of the campus minister but an expression of the community. The presider needs to be sensitive to the needs, moods and experiences of the school.

Prayer should not avoid the environment in and from which it arises. For example, a prayer at a meeting that concludes a difficult academic term might acknowledge the faculty members' fatigue at this point in time. An invocation at a student achievement assembly may express celebration as well as gratitude for a variety of individual gifts. However, prayer should also point beyond the self and immediate concerns. A time of exhaustion suggests a call for renewal and support accompanied by an invitation to care for the vulnerable especially when such outreach is most difficult. A time of celebration calls for thanksgiving along with a reminder for those gifted to put their talents in the service of the greater community.

There may be occasions when the needs of the community appear to contradict Gospel values. "The push for success in sport and study can create, within the bounds of the school system itself, an anti-Gospel set of values every bit as dangerous as the oft-recognized consumerism or materialism of Western society."[33] For example, the propriety of prayer invoking divine intervention to crush an interscholastic opponent is questionable at best.

Prayer in such circumstances should not compromise the integrity of the gospel. At the same time, prayer should not be used to antagonize or intimidate. The balance is found in prayer that reflects the gospel challenge while inviting the community to fidelity.

The public character of prayer in Catholic schools necessitates a concern for inclusivity. Prayer should mirror the needs, experiences and diversity of the gathered faith community. The campus minister must appreciate and draw upon the richness of the community when considering style, form and language in prayer. Public expressions of faith need to reflect cultural, ecumenical and gender sensitivity without appearing contrived or awkward.

Inclusivity extends to the expression of God imagery. "Psychological and social models, male and female images or both together, personal and impersonal references—every one contributes insight that the others do not, for God's livingness moves in a saving relationality that escapes our imagination."[34] "While there is no one adequate way to speak

of the mystery that is God, there exists a need to develop a more inclusive, creative way of speaking and naming "that bears the ancient wisdom with a new justice."[35]

The power of public prayer rests with its ability to animate, ignite, inspire and challenge the individual and community to look beyond the self, the proximate, the familiar and the comfortable. Prayer encourages the community to broaden its vision beyond the confines of a prevalent parochial perception or an unhealthy *status quo*. Prayer that serves to insulate the community in a cocoon of privatized faith or that provides an escape from reality remains divorced from life and consequently is not Christian.

**Prayer is the praxis of a community, manifest through voice, movement or silence and through the "Amen" it invites.**

The public dimension of prayer contains witness value. The presence of the campus minister, especially a lay minister, leading the community in prayer reinforces the message that an expression of faith is the responsibility of all the faithful. This truth is magnified when campus ministers empower others in the school community, particularly students, to accept responsibility for the preparation and proclamation of public prayer.

Like the liturgical year, the academic year and school day possess their own unique rhythms. There are seasons of commemoration and celebration, moments of anxiety and mourning, times of commencement, transition and parting. Prayer sets the tone of each day and usually most activities and gatherings. Whether in petition, thanksgiving or lamentation, in praise or blessing, prayer is the praxis of a community, manifest through voice, movement or silence and through the "Amen" it invites.

It is incumbent, therefore, upon leaders of prayer to prepare. While the Holy Spirit may be considered the "artisan of the living tradition of prayer,"[36] prayer's composition requires the efforts of human artisans. Whether choosing a prayer or composing an original one, presiders must be aware of function, insure coherence and preserve credal integrity.[37]

**Environment plays an essential role in setting the tone for reflective experiences.**

All journeys of significant duration include rest stops allowing the traveler to enjoy the sights, relish the adventure and endure the hardships. So it is with the faith journey. The heart's stirrings beg discovery, life's direction requires examination, and the search born of restlessness craves rejuvenation. The body, mind and spirit, through reflection, step back and stand still surrounded by that which grounds human meaning and being.

Within a school environment, reflection takes a variety of forms and can be sustained through such mediums as prayer groups, days of recollection and retreats. The commitment of time—a day, an overnight, a week—varies by community and depends on student readiness, resources, scheduling, finances and available facilities. Through careful planning even the most limited time frame can yield great benefits when moments are set aside for dialogue, group exercises, presentations, corporate prayer, personal contemplation, silence and shared meals. Ultimately, the quality of the experience rests with the investment made by the participants.

Topics for reflection emerge from numerous sources. The process of human maturation is ripe with tasks, discoveries, joys and challenges, as well as, fears, doubts, anxieties and insecurities. Time shared in prayerful contemplation and mutual exploration of development issues is helpful, especially to the young, who often believe they are alone in bearing the struggles of growing up. The transient nature of a school population suggests themes such as welcome, adaption to new circumstances, respect for diversity, separation and parting. Freshmen may be receptive to programs that center on hospitality, introducing them to the tradition, ethos, charism and story of their new community and enabling them to establish their place within the school. Seniors may value opportunities to prepare for a new phase of their life journey, to evaluate personally and collectively the past and present in anticipation of the future.

A community's expectations for addressing Christian identity deserve scrutiny. One school probed the obligation to love neighbor. A local charitable agency was invited to address the junior class on retreat. Young people listened to the stories of individuals who were previously faceless

statistics, and interacted with those they had anonymously fed and clothed but never met. The impact of the experience became apparent as students gave voice to the growing realization that individuals who were homeless and living with AIDS were their neighbors and shared a common humanity, vulnerability and dignity. This insight translated practically into a greater commitment of material resources to the those in need and a new appreciation for the school's community service requirement.

Environment plays an essential role in setting the tone for reflective experiences. There are advantages to getting away from familiar surroundings with their attendant distractions, though some situations may warrant the use of the familiar. For example, one school holds its freshmen retreats on campus in a rented tent; in this case, the school's own grounds are part of a designed welcome experience.

With imagination and some manual labor, any space can be converted into a location that is aesthetically pleasing and allows for comfort, movement and ease in rearrangement of furniture. The flexibility to gather those present around a central focal point like a table, cross, ambo, book, candle or incense brazier, is useful in calling a community to affective worship that is transforming and necessary for effective retreat activity.[38]

**Providing opportunities for prayer, reflection and the examination of one's life, relationships and faith journey are important parts of Catholic education.**

While coordination of reflection programs falls under the sphere of campus ministry, this does not imply that campus ministers must direct every experience. The theme, purpose or needs of the community may be best served at times by the insights of a retreat director or team from outside the school. Other situations or fiscal constraints may suggest tapping in-house talent. Inviting students, faculty, staff and alumni to share in the planning, preparation and execution of reflection opportunities, imparts ownership and conveys trust. However, since retreats are sometimes conducive to the sharing of personal experiences, all leaders should be made aware that certain responsibilities and liabilities may accompany the hearing of sensitive or revealing information.[39]

Providing opportunities for prayer, reflection and the examination of one's life, relationships and faith journey are important parts of Catholic

education. Care must be taken to insure that these experiences do not exploit the vulnerability of participants, especially the young. Experiences that manipulate emotions do not exhibit respect for the individual or the community. Accompanying the pilgrim through spiritual praxis is a sacred trust that should not be abused nor taken for granted.

# CHAPTER 5:
# LITURGICAL PRAXIS

Ritual is integral to a personal and collective appropriation of identity and mission. Through ritual, participants are enabled to "find their place in the world that they inhabit and to relate their felt experience to a greater whole."[40] First, as Catholic communities, schools need to see liturgical celebrations as essential to the transmission of the faith. Therefore, participation in the public, common worship of the universal church should be a priority. Second, as particular communities possessing unique needs and demographics, schools also must appreciate the value of creating their own ritual expressions to celebrate significant moments and accompany the difficult times that mark life within community. The campus minister:

- is challenged to foster liturgical praxis that remains faithful to the Catholic tradition,
- reflects communal experience, and
- generates a sense of unity and common purpose, yet directs the community ever outward to embrace those who suffer and are marginalized.

Liturgical events are the product of human contexts and should not be divorced from the realities from which they arise. Schools primarily serve the young. Ritual that does not engage their creativity, vitality and gifts

is doomed to irrelevance as are expressions that appear unresponsive to their vulnerability, ignorant of their struggles and inattentive to their frustrations.

> "Exploitation and rejection, suffering and death, failure to show a clear path to identity and self-worth are as much a part of the cultural experience of our children as belonging and sharing and nurturance and affirmation. The focus on the latter and the denial of the former must result in a distortion of the message of salvation."[4]

**Liturgical events are the product of human contexts and should not be divorced from the realities from which they arise.**

The power of Christian liturgy rests with its capacity to embrace this tension between what is and what must and eventually will be; a tension evident in and central to the paschal mystery it celebrates. If the young are to be respected, then they must be trusted with the mystery; they must be allowed to be church.

To be church entails the full, active, conscious participation which constitutes the nature of liturgy.[5] In true liturgical celebration there are no passive spectators and no performers, for the experience of the sacred is to be found in the action of the entire assembly of believers: "the living words, the living gestures, the living sacrifice, the living meal."[6]

The invitation to participate and share responsibility for liturgical ministries requires preparation. The young are quite capable and often eager both to participate and function as acolytes, lectors, musicians and ushers. However, they do not relish being in positions that may lead to public embarrassment. When students are given the opportunity to prepare and practice for their respective roles, they develop a degree of comfort and confidence. As experience teaches, when students are not afforded ample preparation, mistakes occur, and in an attempt to save face, some will magnify the error to give the appearance of intention and control. It is occasionally advantageous to choose the role of clown rather than to look the fool before one's peers. Respect for the sensibilities of youth and the quality of participatory worship necessitate preparation.

It should not be forgotten that the character of a school as a transgenerational, multicultural, dual gender community possesses witness value. Efforts should be made to draw visible representation from all strata of the community. When a community gathers, the strain of

commonality grounded in and born of a shared human condition emerges amidst diversity. "The commonality here seeks the best which people can bring together....For the assembly seeks its own expression...amidst actions which probe the entire human experience."[11]

**There must be moments when the community gathers and remembers and gives thanks.**

## Celebration of the Sacraments

### *Eucharist*

Identifying a community as Catholic recognizes the centrality of sacramental celebration. Of primary importance is the celebration of Eucharist. The eucharistic table fuels a committed living which promises that love and justice are possible. If a school calls itself Catholic, then there must be moments when the community gathers and remembers and gives thanks. If a school considers itself Catholic, then its core is a community that takes and blesses, breaks bread and eats, pours the cup and drinks. While space-considerations and resource-limitations may dictate how frequently the entire school community gathers to celebrate eucharist, the nature of a Catholic school as church demands this occur at the very least once in an academic year. There is merit in providing opportunity for more intimate celebrations of the Eucharist, for example through class or team Masses; however, these occasions should supplement not replace the gathering of the whole community.

### *Reconciliation*

In the living that marks the time between what is and what will be, there are moments scarred by fractured relationships, neglected obligations and unfulfilled promises. In other words, human experience is compromised personally and socially by sin. The reality of sin and its effects on the human condition underscore the need for a healing that invites both the individual and community to conversion. The gift of forgiveness and its implicit responsibility to transform the hurtful and restore the broken are celebrated in the sacrament of reconciliation.

In an era of increased violence, where retaliation is the preferred response to hurt, young people desperately require a model which offers

**There are times and events that beg for ritual expression and communal presence.**

an alternative to vengeance. Through the celebration of reconciliation, youth experience forgiveness as the catalyst and prerequisite for a new beginning. Reconciliation cannot be attained without forgiveness. Forgiveness "does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship."[45]

Ideally, the community that gathers around the eucharistic table should also gather in repentance to seek the forgiveness necessary for reconciliation. Realistically, logistical factors may preclude sacramental celebration on a school-wide basis. Campus ministry should provide opportunities for the celebration of reconciliation on the individual level, and on the communal level if possible.

On rare occasions, a school may find itself in a situation that entails the celebration of a liturgy usually associated with the context of the parish; for example, liturgies for Christian burial, funerals, marriage, initiation or anointing of the sick. These circumstances may occur when the individuals concerned identify the school as their primary Christian community or when they attribute to the school a significant role in bringing them to a sacrament. These are situations which warrant sensitivity and discretion. While a Catholic school can be considered an experience of the local church, it should not detract from the importance of the parish community. There are times, however, when pastoral needs may best be served by the school, though the cooperation of the jurisdictional parish should be sought.

## Other Ritual Expressions

There are seasons and difficulties unique to school life and moments and relationships that impart meaning to the rhythms of the academic year. Whether signifying passage or initiation, responding to loss or confusion, these times and events beg for ritual expression and communal presence. Unfortunately, Catholic school leaders often attempt to sanctify all that is significant with the Mass instead of employing alternate means of recognition and expression. This trivializes the centrality

of Eucharist by placing the celebration in service to everything from the distribution of class rings to the promotion of athletic team unity.

Liturgical praxis is not exhausted by sacramental celebration. The wealth of the biblical and ecclesial traditions furnishes symbols, images, patterns, structures and languages capable of being combined in innovative ways to render ritually communal experience. For campus ministers the richness of school life, traditions and community provides ample opportunity for creative improvisation in worship and blessing. School life gives rise to multiple moments ripe with ritual possibility, such as:

- rites of passage signified by the reception of a class ring or pin;
- commissioning of students as they begin service projects or assume leadership roles;
- ambiguity and fear experienced in times of crisis, threatened peace or national emergency;
- initiation into student organizations;
- sorrow and anger endured when accident, illness, suicide or violence claim a life;
- commemoration of an anniversary or event of particular importance to the community, such as the school founder's day; and
- celebration of national holidays, such as Thanksgiving or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

While a campus minister may exhibit a degree of freedom in the preparation and celebration of these ritual occasions, he or she should not interpret this as license to sacrifice the integrity of tradition on the altar of novelty. "Adults who were not themselves disciplined by and who have not appropriated the great Christian ritual symbols and biblical stories that disclose the paschal mystery are not yet free to improvise, to create and to innovate ritually to bring children to celebration."[16] For ritual activity to be effective it must be recognizable to the community and employ "balance, quality, variety, tone, and pace."[17] Furthermore, good ritual invites participation through redundancy, the presentation of a single reality in a multiplicity of forms, and repetition, the recurrence of valued tension-laden behavior.[18] This points to the importance of tradition. As there may be times when the alma mater is typically sung, so too there may be times when a particular prayer, blessing or ritual becomes associated with a specific class or school event.

The commencement of hostilities in the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm created anxiety in one school which led the campus minister and community to create and celebrate a simple daily ritual until hostilities ceased. Members of the community were invited to write the names of individuals they were concerned about in a book placed in the

**Ritual should embody an invitation to reflect through both preaching and silence.**

hall before the chapel window. At noon a daily liturgy for peace and remembrance was conducted by the campus minister and students from the ministry team. The format was based on the liturgy of the hours, with time for prayer, readings, reflection and intercession. The moment for intercessory prayer included the bringing forth of the book, naming those listed and their connection to the community, if that information had been provided. The list grew with each passing day, yet the name of every parent, relative, alumnus and friend was read. The numbers of those who participated varied daily; however, those who had recorded names began to appear with increased frequency. The ritual was celebrated not only during the school day but one evening as well with an invitation extended to the parents and families of alumni deployed in the Gulf. The chapel was filled to capacity. In the life of this school, the simple ritual gave voice to personal and communal concerns and connected them to a universal concern for peace. The value of each individual was affirmed as he or she was made present to the school community through the process of naming and remembering. Pastorally, the ritual provided an opportunity for those in need to be identified, many who would have carried their concern alone, discovered the strength of prayerful community support.

Finally, especially in communities with young people, ritual should embody an invitation to reflect through both preaching and silence. Through preaching, which need not be limited to sacramental celebrations, voice is given to the community. The gathered assembly is respected when preaching demonstrates a sensitivity for the developmental character of the hearers, and is the result of preparation, meditation and careful listening to their needs, expectations and limitations. Fidelity to the proclamation of the word demands preaching that points away from itself and leads the community to look beyond their own needs towards an ethical consideration of those who are considered "other" or even different. Through silence, voice is given to the mystery which echoes in the most hidden sanctuary of the fragile human heart. Respect for the community is evident when time and room are given for individuals to be quietly alone in the presence of God.

## Sacred Space

There is a distinction between *having sacred space* and *making space sacred.* Catholic schools should strive to designate an area which is in effect holy ground. Financial and architectural constraints may prohibit the construction of a chapel, but imagination, effort and inexpensive materials can insure the presence of a permanent sacred place within the school; a place conducive to prayer, refuge, reflection and small group gatherings. In this way any school can have sacred space. The Catholic identity and mission of a school, however, occasionally require the public gathering of the entire community. For most schools this necessitates using neighboring parish facilities, when available, or making school space sacred.

**There is a distinction between *having sacred space* and *making space sacred.***

The act of making space sacred rests on the basic premise that the true locus of the sacred is found in the action of the gathered assembly. The celebration and the persons celebrating create a home for the sacred. The community and its liturgical action need to be housed in a place that allows for "praying and singing, for listening and speaking—a place for human interaction and active participation—where the mysteries of God are recalled and celebrated in human history."[49]

Practical factors must be considered in choosing appropriate space within the confines of school property:

- seating capacity to accommodate the whole community with a degree of comfort,
- ability to facilitate liturgical movement and the distribution of communion with minimum distraction,
- ability to hear and see, and
- effects of weather.

The celebration of liturgy in space not normally thought of as sacred—the gymnasium, cafeteria, athletic field, multi-purpose room or auditorium—requires the physical creation of an environment receptive to worship and a transformation of vision that enables the community to see the space in a new way; familiar, yet holy. Art, music, the choice and arrangement of furniture and liturgical objects are vital to the creation of a welcoming ambiance. Communicating to students the significance of

celebrating liturgy in a place that is central to the daily life of the school and involving them in the physical labor of transforming the space enables them to visualize and accept the space in a new way. The worship environment in effect functions as a credal statement of the community gathered. "Student worship space should both express the holiness of God's people who make up the assembly as well as invite them to the affective worship experiences that are most appropriate for them."[50]

## The Power of Ritual

A recent graduate of a Catholic high school stood before the gym reminiscing. As a student in a school that reveled in achievements and valued sports, he had spent countless hours in that room as spectator, athlete, recipient of awards, and member of a community celebrating one championship or another. But the moment he treasured most centered on the morning the gym was transformed into sacred space with the entire community gathered around the eucharistic table to celebrate the feast of the patron saint of the school.

A scheduling conflict with the local parish caused the school to use the gym, the only place in the building capable of accommodating over nine hundred people. The shift in location was treated not as an inconvenience but as an opportunity to bring the feast of the patron home, and to celebrate in the one room that truly served as heart to the community. Art students designed backdrops and program covers. The music department provided a wind ensemble and chamber chorus to supplement the liturgy choir. Students on the campus ministry team served as lectors and acolytes. The National Honor Society and student government functioned as ushers to facilitate ease in movement.

As the feast commemorates the founder of the order affiliated with the school, efforts were made to render explicit the manner in which the school shared in the charism of the religious community. The celebration began with a student pronouncing the order's mission statement. A priest religious proclaimed the gospel of Matthew 25:31-40. Student lectors also proclaimed the good news, as it had been lived by the community. When the questions of the blessed were asked with regards to recognition of God in neighbor, a student responded by reading an excerpt from a letter expressing gratitude from an individual or organization that had received assistance from the school. The feeding of the hungry was acknowledged by correspondence from a group that serves homeless people with AIDS. The welcoming of a stranger was affirmed through thanks given for student endeavors to provide Christmas gifts

for children in need.

Visiting the imprisoned was recalled by a senior, who as a freshman, had represented the school in a visit to a foreign consulate to deliver letters requesting the release of a Catholic priest unjustly jailed for teaching the faith. The student announced that three years of diligent appeals had finally secured the man's freedom.

The good news proclaimed was the Gospel lived by the community and celebrated through ritual. This experience is unique to Catholic schools and demonstrates that the power of Christian liturgy rests with the reality that it is the celebration of a community at a given place and time, celebrated with its best resources, arts, talents and gifts in the light of a dynamic tradition.[51] "The words and rites gather into one a diversity of persons and cultures, the living and the dead, human events past and present, lives rich and impoverished, earth and its cycles and its inner yearnings. All these are gathered into the pasch of Christ and into the promise it offers."[52] When entrusted to the young, it is a promise that perpetuates the spark of hope.

# Chapter 6:
# Social Praxis

With increasing frequency, the young find themselves not as treasures to be protected but as objects to be exploited. Under siege by societal forces which in effect deny youth a sense of value and a voice, adolescents come to perceive themselves in the manner in which they are regarded and portrayed, as a problem rather than a resource. "During this time of social marginality, they learn to be consumers, encouraged toward indulgence in spending for themselves."[53] Within this atmosphere, those vulnerable because of age are tempted to breed hostility and indifference in response to others who are also vulnerable but marked as different.

The collective failure to recognize, appreciate, cultivate and celebrate the vitality and potential of the young sows a harvest of pessimism and apathy. It must be not be forgotten that youth, "by their responses and actions, tell the old whether life as represented to them has some vital promise, and it is the young who carry in them the power to confirm those who confirm them, to renew and regenerate, to disavow what is rotten, to reform and rebel."[54]

By providing students with opportunities for social praxis, Catholic schools participate in transforming the future by allowing youth to address the brokenness of the present. The gifts of the young are engaged

**Social praxis does not exist to give Catholic tradition relevance; it *is* tradition.**

through social ministry, informed by a vision that invites them to place those gifts in service to others. The successful communication of such a vision requires acknowledgment of the developmental struggles and environmental conditions which impact young people today. A vision worthy of youthful fidelity must nurture a positive self-image, generate identification with and not opposition to the suffering and the marginalized, empower the young to claim as their own the obligation to make a difference and employ their wisdom and talents in action that makes hope possible.

A faith that seeks understanding, within a community nourished around the same table, must move beyond itself to an appreciation of neighbor in an inclusive and universal way that encompasses the vulnerable, the marginalized and even the enemy. The presence of service in Catholic education has been justified by some as an attempt to reach young people by giving "Catholic traditions more relevance through social services and works of charity, like tutoring poor, inner-city children, visiting the elderly and working in homeless shelters."[55] This distortion creates a false dichotomy between the communication of tradition and living faith. Social praxis does not exist to give Catholic tradition relevance; it is tradition. The integrity of the faith demands a lived aspect, even from the young. The identity of a school as Catholic demands fidelity to the scriptural mandate to demonstrate love of God through love of neighbor. Social ministry is a necessary component of a Catholic education, integral to identity, essential to mission, complementary to the religious studies curriculum.

Unfortunately, the tendency to relegate Catholic social teaching to the periphery of dogma, enables this misconception to prevail. Appropriately termed by some as "our best kept secret,"[56] social teaching remains conspicuously absent as a grounding reason for the existence of community service and outreach by Catholic schools. Effective social ministry that reflects a Catholic identity requires a basic literacy and fluency in social teaching. The potential to inspire youth to assume responsibility for the renewal of society has yet to be significantly explored.[57] This is an area rich with possibilities for collaborative efforts between campus ministry and the religious studies department. The church specifically calls for the communication of social teaching, and

its underlying biblical precepts and ethical principles, at all levels of Catholic education.[58] Faithful adherence to this mandate challenges academic communities to develop means of transmission that demonstrate an appreciation for both study and service.

## Task

Social praxis especially in an educational setting must facilitate the task of "conscientizing the members of church and society about the realities of injustice and the social demands of the Gospel."[59] Educating students from all socio-economic levels, Catholic schools are uniquely suited and obligated to address this task.

For example, when serving students accustomed to abundance and privilege, schools must challenge their young to re-evaluate their lifestyles, their power and their allocation of resources from the perspective of the disenfranchised. Those who reside in the sphere of affluence must be taught to see the people on the margins, appreciate their dignity and recognize that small gifts of charity do not exempt one "from the great duties imposed by justice."[60] The establishment of a minimum level of well-being for all is a corporate duty, yet when so many lack access to basic material necessities, the accountability of those with greater resources is called into question, especially with regards to accumulation and consumption. Catholic educators are obligated to counter social blindness and isolation that can accompany a life of indulgence.

In response to this challenge, a campus minister working with economically privileged students developed a voluntary program of prison ministry visitation designed to sensitize young people who are likely to hold positions of social, political or financial influence in the future. With the cooperation of the local prison and its chaplain, students spend time in a medium security detention center listening and talking to inmates. The experience enables students to comprehend the reality of incarceration and related socio-economic factors in human terms through interaction with individuals and their stories. Through reading, study, contact and reflection, students are invited to consider the implications of a social issue from the perspective of the marginalized. Hopefully, these experiences will have the long term impact of creating a group of compassionate employers, politicians, educators and community leaders.

In serving students whose families strive to provide the conveniences and comforts but at times struggle to keep the basics, schools must cultivate in their young an abiding concern for others who are more vulnerable, a concern grounded in the understanding that meeting fundamen-

tal human needs preempts the desire to acquire luxury consumer goods. To postpone concern until one has achieved personal security is detrimental to the common good. Catholic educators are obligated to counter the tendency to focus exclusively on self interests, a temptation that can accompany life in the middle.

Opportunities that enable these students to identify with the vulnerable prove valuable in dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions associated with poverty and other marginalizing conditions. The gospel imperative to love neighbor as self is easier to apprehend when the self is seen in the eyes of the vulnerable other. The reflections of students who participate in programs that allow them to interact with people on the fringes of society reveal that their experiences foster a sense of solidarity born of the insight that these are real human beings with names, faces and stories just like them. Bonds are forged as students realize that their own, at times comfortable, lives in the middle are susceptible to the same conditions which can push people to the social and economic margins.[6]

Finally, when serving students who live without the essentials, schools must enable their young to assume an active role in securing their own rights and those conditions necessary to sustain life in community. Those who reside in the sphere of the invisible must be taught to recognize their inherent dignity, claim their legitimate rights to participate and assume the correlative responsibilities participation demands. The response to privation rests with empowerment, a process based on the premise that deprivation and the capacity to make a difference are not mutually exclusive. To empower is to enable those on the margins to place talents, time and energy at the disposal of the community with the hopes of effecting structural changes that benefit all. Catholic educators are obligated to counter the cycles of dependence, violence, anger and despair that can engulf life on the periphery.

Indispensable to the education of young people on the fringe are opportunities that allow them to serve. Powerful testaments emerge from youth who return to their communities and offer their gifts, especially to those in greater need than themselves. Voice is restored with the growing realization that their actions not only matter but provide those younger than themselves with an alternative example and a reason to hope.

## Criteria for Social Ministry

In designing social ministry programs, a school must honestly evaluate the extent of its lived fidelity to the ethical imperative posed by Scripture and reiterated in tradition. Certain criteria emerge that should char-

acterize social praxis in Catholic education. First, as social teaching consistently reminds us, a preferential option for the poor deserves priority. While all human life is vulnerable by virtue of a limited physical existence subject to the unpredictable, uncontrollable and unpreventable, a significant portion of the global population is susceptible to conditions that threaten and diminish the quality of life. Schools must teach students to respond to the privation that results when:

- individuals are deprived of the material necessities essential to sustaining existence;
- fundamental human rights are violated;
- opportunities for enhancement are inaccessible;
- supportive, nurturing, caring environments are absent;
- individuals resources and creation are exploited; and
- hopes for a better future are obliterated.

**In designing social ministry programs, a school must honestly evaluate the extent of its lived fidelity to the ethical imperative posed by Scripture and reiterated in tradition.**

Second, since no one approach has the capacity to resolve all the complications associated with any given social plight or concrete situation, a variety of praxis opportunities should be available for the school community to explore. These opportunities should not be restricted to seasonal efforts and should reflect responses that meet needs on both a short and long term basis as well as those that seek to achieve the transformation of unjust social structures. Exposure to multiple responses enables youth to recognize the complexity of social needs and to avoid oversimplifying their causes.

Third, social praxis should connect the school community to both the immediate neighborhood and the greater global community. Responses that underscore the unity of the human family and promote solidarity are crucial to the educational process. Whether accomplished through such mediums as letter writing campaigns in reaction to human rights violations or recycling supplies for use by impoverished schools in developing nations, social praxis should involve students with the world. "Either solidarity is universal or it is not at all; a selective solidarity is the very contradiction of fraternity....each member of the human family must

feel directly involved, committed, responsible."[62]

Fourth, students must be taught to respond with justice, charity and service, especially to those within the school community whose needs outweigh their own. Students do not learn through study alone. If a school respects the value of each individual, cares for the needs of its own vulnerable, heeds the voices of its least powerful and provides opportunities for all to participate, then it creates a community capable of raising up young people who will treat others as they themselves have been treated.

## A Community of Praxis

If a school calls itself Catholic, then social praxis must be ingrained within its community and made manifest in expressions of personal and collective accountability for neighbor, world and creation. Each member of the community—students, faculty, staff, parents—is charged to be light and leaven in a broken world. It is of symbolic and practical significance that all be invited to serve and that social praxis not be perceived as the exclusive role of the religious studies faculty.

Clearly students should be involved in service if a school is to be faithful to the integrity of its mission as church. A dilemma arises with regards to the means of guaranteeing the experience of praxis. Many schools have incorporated community or Christian service into the set of requirements compulsory for graduation or link service to parish Confirmation preparation. This approach is not without critics, for example, one controversy centers around mandating that which should be expected or self-initiated. Ideally, love of neighbor, lived out in service, should be a part of Christian life. Therefore, for some offering an incentive or threatening with negative consequences can appear antithetical to the spirit of the gospel message, and may result in a barter mentality whereby certain students evaluate every act of kindness or justice in terms of its potential to merit service credit. The concept of a community service requirement presents an oxymoron. However, sometimes individuals, out of fear, ignorance, apathy, selfishness, laziness or weakness, avoid doing what is good or right. One student, who learned much fulfilling a 40 hour obligation working with the homeless, honestly admitted, "what really bothers me is that I know that if I did not have to go [to a soup kitchen], I wouldn't have been there."[63]

While these criticisms are valid, they are outweighed by the inherent values of service programs for the student, school and community at large. In a Catholic school, a service requirement is about more than

instilling volunteerism and good citizenship. Service is intrinsic to the learning process; a way to render incarnate the lessons taught in religious studies courses. It is integral to the understanding and appropriation of the faith and a means of cultivating what will hopefully be a lifelong habit. Any requirement should not be presented as a separate entity but as an integrated part of a total school commitment. Efforts should mobilize support from all segments of the academic community.

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The witness value of personal involvement by students, faculty and staff in ministering to the needs of others should never be underestimated. Students stand before classmates and assembled faculty to solicit aid with every aspect of a Thanksgiving food drive, from generating awareness to the delivering of collected goods. Various faculty, students and staff members sacrifice lunch and free periods to serve meals daily at a soup kitchen adjacent to the school. Religion and Spanish classes collaborate with campus ministry in a coordinated attempt to help restore to his people, a missionary priest who was unjustly expelled from a country where he has labored for years with the poor. A reporter from the school newspaper writes of her experience keeping vigil with a religious sister and her supporters seeking to rectify an injustice. African American students from various Catholic high schools unite to organize Kwanza parties for youngsters in a neighboring children's home. An inner-city high school transforms an abandoned lot into a neighborhood park, cultivating a garden of hope amidst urban decay. These are a few examples drawn from a variety of schools that demonstrate the witness potential of service that engages an entire community.

For social praxis to be Christian, it must be grounded in a relationship of reciprocity that respects the other, even the most vulnerable, as an active participant and mutual gift giver. This poses a challenge because the creation of a relationship necessitates a prolonged investment of time and the risk that one's gift may be unappreciated and even rejected. In developing social ministry programs a campus minister should remember that the school as a community, and individual students in the performance of service, are not the only praxis agents. They are partners

with those being served who equally have gifts to bring to the table. Therefore, opportunities should exist that promote interaction. Students should be encouraged, especially in the fulfillment of service requirements, to commit to a specific placement. Reflections of students who have done so convey the insight that there was much to learn from those served. With varying degrees of surprise, the young confess that the giver unexpectedly also became a receiver.

In the same manner, a school should strive to nurture an enduring, mutual relationship with a community in need. A day center providing assistance for homeless people living with AIDS forms an alliance with a high school. An association that begins as seasonal charity evolves over the years into a relationship characterized by a mutual exchange of gifts, trust and support at personal and communal levels. Students, faculty and staff donate the goods most needed and enjoyed by the center's members. Volunteers from both school and center combine talents, time and energy in renovating and painting a new and improved facility.

Center members cheer on the football team during a particularly difficult season. An alumnus returns from college over the holidays, makes a donation and helps with the delivery of Christmas presents; another coordinates a drive at the office where he is employed for the summer. Homeless people proudly wear school t-shirts and students are amazed that some not only know the school's reputation but are well versed in its traditions and treasured legends. Young people gain a new perspective on service as they hear a person living with AIDS tell of volunteer-work with those dying of AIDS in local hospitals. A student whose mother is HIV and an addict writes to thank a center member for sharing his life-story on a class retreat; it has brought hope to the youngster's personal struggle.

These are but a few moments that demonstrate what is possible when a relationship of reciprocity is risked. Diverse communities are no longer strangers but partners who share the responsibility of making a difference. Alienation is gradually replaced by solidarity.

For social praxis to make a permanent impression that results in a transformed future, it must move, and sometimes drag, the center to the edge and bring the edge to the heart of the center.[64] As one young person, brought to the edge by his experience at a soup kitchen, reflected in his journal, "I looked at myself, especially the clothes I was wearing, the car we drove up in, and the school we go to. It wasn't until then that I realized that I was feeling ashamed of myself. For a sudden moment, the world paused in my eyes. I wanted this to happen so I could avoid eye-contact with the people in line."[65]

Once priorities and lifestyle are questioned, unjust conditions can no

longer be dismissed as inevitable. Once contact is made, ignorance can no longer be an excuse for inaction and indifference. Once eyes meet, the individual and the community are challenged to recognize the vulnerable other as kin, and to answer, with the living of personal and communal life, the haunting question of Cain.

> Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" *Genesis 4:9*

# Conclusion

The ecclesial vision that emerged from the Second Vatican Council engendered a flourishing variety of ministries and transformed the concept of minister. Within this context, campus ministry in secondary education continues to evolve as a unique apostolate. While the ministry currently experiences its metaphorical adolescence, those who participate in it are faced with resolving the tasks and overcoming the growing pains that typically characterize the process of maturation.

Adolescence is a crucial period of transition marked by increased vulnerability as well as heightened potential. Successful passage requires the capacity to integrate a solid sense of self with a healthy communal identification. If campus ministry is to survive on the local level, there must be room for individual schools to develop models that respond to the perceived needs and characters of their concrete communities. At the same time, the survival of campus ministry universally, as a distinctive ministry, requires the existence of a common ground that provides a definition and purpose that transcends particular expressions. School communities are challenged to create programs that address their specific circumstances while recognizing that theological and pastoral foundations are vital to the acceptance of campus ministry in its own right. The intent of this book is not to produce a recipe for the development of programs, but to introduce foundations in order to invite the type of

**School communities are challenged to create programs that address their specific circumstances while recognizing that theological and pastoral foundations are vital to the acceptance of campus ministry in its own right.**

reflection that should accompany the implementation of any ministerial initiative.

Adolescence is marked by a search for persons and endeavors that are worthy of commitment. Cultivating this fidelity requires the promise that the investment be mutual. For campus ministry to thrive beyond its youth, schools must demonstrate a sustained commitment through the reasonable allocation of personnel, resources and time. Granted fiscal concerns impact the extent of communal investment, but consideration must also be given to scheduling, especially with regards to the school calendar, space availability and the campus minister's workload. Provision of support services and the nature of collegial involvement also warrant careful planning.

The depth of a school's commitment to a ministry program is illustrated by its willingness to invest in individuals who serve as campus ministers. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the high turnover and attrition rate in campus ministry is attributable partially to a degree of personal inadequacy felt by some campus ministers. Too often, individuals with little or no training assume the position to allow a school to staff a program. Admittedly, the pool of theologically and pastorally qualified professionals is small. However, in all fairness to the community, the integrity of the profession and the campus minister, a commitment must be made to the ongoing formation of those with limited experience, training, education or skills. The willingness of the school to invest in its campus minister and of the minister to invest in his or her own professional development demonstrates the conviction that campus ministry is to be treated not as an avocation, pursued in spare moments, but as central to the mission of a Catholic school.

Ministry is a human enterprise and as such will always remain an adventure with endless possibilities awaiting discovery. These possibilities must be explored, examined and developed by particular school communities and individual campus ministers. With this conviction, *Campus*

*Ministry: Identity, Mission and Praxis* represents a reflection that hopes to provide a point of departure for dialogue and a framework for ministry. Any discussion of such fundamental issues as identity, mission and praxis will inevitably lead to the raising of even more questions, especially as the foundations are integrated with lived experience. It is my hope that these pages will provide a springboard for additional reflection and conversation.

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# Reflection Questions

*Campus Ministry: Identity, Mission and Praxis* discusses the importance of knowing and understanding school and community context in regard to history, tradition and culture.

What aspects of your school and community context have been important for you to know, include, communicate with and learn from in your role as campus minister?

Do you have any suggestions for the orientation of a new campus minister in this regard? What questions should be asked? What information shared?

✣ ✣ ✣

The need and importance of a solid theoretical foundation for campus ministry is stressed.

What key elements should be part of the academic preparation for campus ministry?

✣ ✣ ✣

How do you connect students and faculty with the religious community's heritage, charism and/or particular tradition shaping your school's mission? What additional opportunities do you see in this regard?

✣ ✣ ✣

What are the advantages for the campus minister to also be a classroom teacher? Are there circumstances or conditions that would influence your position on this combination of roles? When is this preferred, and when is it better not to combine campus ministry and classroom teaching?

Are there other operative and successful models, than a school having

a specified campus minister, that address the same student needs?

✧ ✧ ✧

As you consider the shape of campus ministry for yourself and for your colleagues what on-going support would best help you in your efforts to advance professionally and in the development of your campus ministry program(s)?

How would you define the mission of campus ministry in your setting?

✧ ✧ ✧

The practice of campus ministry has four dimensions: pastoral, spiritual, liturgical and social. Are these four dimensions appropriate for your situation? What opportunities, constraints and challenges do you associate with each dimension?

✧ ✧ ✧

Is it possible to achieve the goals reflected in **Section II: Praxis** unless there is a **team** of people involved in campus ministry? Can only the campus minister achieve these goals?

✧ ✧ ✧

Can you offer examples of the importance of a sense of hospitality and an environment of trust to pastoral expression of campus ministry?

✧ ✧ ✧

What student referral resources are important for campus ministers?

✧ ✧ ✧

What example would you share, plan or propose to support prayer as a faith expression of the school community, the importance of reflection, environment as an essential component of prayer and liturgical gatherings, and the power of ritual in the spiritual life of the school community?

✧ ✧ ✧

What parameters do you use to shape social praxis, or service learning? How have you been able to link student experiences with reflection and classroom learning? Have you been able to engage the adult school community?

What are your unanswered questions?

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# Appendix A:

## The National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-first Century

### Prologue

We leaders of Catholic schools believe that our schools are a great gift to our church and a great gift to our nation. Our convictions are supported by fact and faith. Our convictions are shared by many, including thousands of our colleagues, many of whom have participated in the regional meetings leading up to this Washington event; many of whom will participate in the continuing work of the Congress in the years to come. Our convictions are shared by researchers, public officials and policy makers who have reminded us of the many achievements of our schools during the days this Congress met in Washington.

Catholic schools are deeply rooted in the life of the church, the body of Jesus Christ, who is the source of all life. Catholic schools draw their life's breath from their roots in the Catholic community and they, in turn, breathe new life into the church.

Catholic schools are proud and productive partners in American education. At this moment in history, Catholic schools are no longer a small number of outposts offering separation and security in a hostile culture, but a vast network of institutions lighting the lives of the communities they serve in every corner of the land. Today our Catholic schools are a beacon of hope for many, especially the poor, and a powerful model for those who are working to redefine and rebuild American education.

We commit ourselves to continue to tell the story of Catholic schools

proudly and loudly. We also commit ourselves to work together to strengthen and expand the network of Catholic schools in this nation. The future of Catholic schools is ours to shape. As leaders drawn from many corners of the land, we accept this call, and invite others to join us in this great effort. In order to shape a stronger and more extensive network of Catholic schools we must build on our present strengths, the great legacy of those who preceded us. We must clearly identify our fundamental beliefs and respond boldly and imaginatively to the challenges of the future by offering clear directions rooted in our beliefs. With the power of the Spirit and the participation of many, this is what we have done. What follows is the product of prayer, debate, consensus. We offer it as a platform for action.

## Beliefs

*Before proposing a set of directions for the future, the delegates identified the fundamental beliefs that provide the basis for their recommendations for action:*

### The Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools

We believe that:

- The Catholic school is an integral part of the church's mission to proclaim the Gospel, build faith communities, celebrate though worship and serve others.
- The commitment to academic excellence, which fosters the intellectual development of faculty and students, is an integral part of the mission of the Catholic school.
- The Catholic school is an evangelizing, educational community.
- The spiritual formation of the entire school community is an essential dimension of the Catholic school's mission.
- The Catholic school is a unique faith-centered community which integrates thinking and believing in ways that encourage intellectual growth, nurture faith and inspire action.
- The Catholic school is an experience of the church's belief, tradition and sacramental life.
- The Catholic school creates a supportive and challenging climate which affirms the dignity of all persons within the school community.

### Leadership In and On Behalf of Catholic Schools

We believe that:

- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is rooted in an on-

going relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is deeply spiritual, servant-like, prophetic, visionary and empowering.
- Effective leadership is critical to the mission of the church and the future of Catholic schools.
- The recruitment, selection and formation of leaders is essential to the future of Catholic schools.
- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools involves a shift from vertical models to collegial models.

## Catholic Schools and Society

We believe that:

- Catholic schools are an integral part of education in the United States and a valuable asset to the nation.
- Catholic schools support parents, family, church and society in the education of youth.
- Catholic schools are committed to educate students of diverse economic, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Catholic schools are called to be catalysts for social change based on Gospel values.
- Catholic schools are called to be exemplary models of academic excellence and faith development.

## Catholic School Governance and Finance

We believe that:

- The financial future of Catholic schools demands securing new and available resources.
- Catholic schools are essential to the life and future of the church in the United States and require the support of the entire Catholic community.
- The integrity of Catholic schools requires comprehensively applying the principles of social justice.
- Formation in the basic mission, principles and traditions of Catholic education is essential for all involved in Catholic school leadership.
- Effective Catholic school governance requires the preparation, empowerment and collaboration of the community which it serves.
- Governance with the full participation of the laity is the key to the future of Catholic schools.
- Catholic schools should be available and financially accessible to Catholic families and to others who support the mission.

### Political Action, Public Policy and Catholic Schools

We believe that:

- Democratic principles demand that all parents have a right both to choose appropriate education for their children and to receive a fair share of education tax dollars to exercise that right.
- Federal, state and local level political action involving the total Catholic community is essential to protect the rights of all students and parents.
- Advocacy for low income families is essential to tax-supported parental choice in education.
- Coalitions are essential for successful political action.
- Tax supported systems of educational choice can improve all schools.

## Directions

The most important recommendations for achieving the goals of the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-first Century are contained in the directional statements developed for each of the topic areas. These directional statements were prioritized by topic groups and ratified by the assembly. The first statement in each group represents the highest priority for future action.

### The Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools

- We will guarantee opportunities for ongoing spiritual formation for Catholic school faculties, staff and leadership.
- We will challenge our faculty, staff, students, and families to witness to their belief in Jesus Christ.
- We will champion superior standards of academic excellence.
- We commit ourselves to teach an integrated curriculum rooted in gospel values and Catholic teachings.
- We will welcome and support a diverse cultural and economic population as a hallmark of our Catholic identity.

### Leadership of and on Behalf of Catholic Schools

- We will challenge the U.S.bishops to implement their November, 1990 statement on Catholic schools, since their leadership is critical to the future of Catholic schools.
- We will actively identify, select and develop Catholic school leaders who espouse Gospel values and demonstrate professional competencies.
- We will demand that innovation, experimentation, risk-taking, col-

laboration and collegiality be the hallmarks of Catholic school leadership.

- We will challenge Catholic colleges and universities to hold as a priority the development of Catholic educational administrators and teachers.
- We will aggressively recruit and prepare leaders who reflect the Church's multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic populations.

### Catholic Schools and Society

- We will educate students to meet the intellectual, social and ethical challenges of living in a technological and global society.
- We will open new schools and design alternative school models to reflect the changing needs of family, church, and society.
- We will educate and challenge our staffs, students, and parents to reject racism, sexism, and discrimination.
- We will aggressively recruit, retain and develop staff to reflect the needs of an increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-cultural society.
- We will establish curriculum that acknowledges and incorporates the contributions of men and women of diverse cultures and races.

### Catholic School Governance and Finance

- We will challenge the entire Catholic community and others to make a radical commitment to Catholic schools and generous investment in them.
- We will establish governance structures which give all those committed to the Catholic school's mission the power and responsibility to achieve it.
- We will immediately initiate long-range strategic planning processes for Catholic schools at local, diocesan, and national levels.
- We will implement in every school just compensation plans for all Catholic school personnel.
- We will implement and evaluate comprehensive development programs at the local, diocesan, and national levels.

### Political Action, Public Policy and Catholic Schools

- We will organize broad-based coalitions to lobby on every level in order to achieve equal educational opportunities for all children, parents and educators.
- We will aggressively pursue legislation enabling all parents to choose the education appropriate for their children with their share of the

education tax dollar.

- We will promote tax-supported school choice options for all that enable the poor to choose as effectively as all others.
- We will create structures to direct and coordinate the political agenda of tax-supported choice in education for all parents.
- We will persuade the American public that full parental choice in education is a necessity in a free society.

*"Campus Ministry: Identity, Mission and Praxis* contains important material not only for campus ministers, but for administrators of Catholic schools.... Even if a campus minister is not employed by a high school, the theology department and the administration can learn and benefit by reading the publication and implementing its ideas. Dr. Nanko's insights stimulate, encourage and identify vital elements of a dynamic theology department and campus ministry program."

Rev. Paul Lauzon
Principal
Columbus High School, Marshfield, WI

"...[Dr. Nanko's] material is well researched, documented and accurately presented. In fact, the author recovers some aspects of theological thought that are often left out of many discussions of campus ministry."

Rev. John Tuohy, PhD
Corporate Ethicist
Mercy Healthcare System, Oklahoma City, OK

"...This document is very well done and achieves its primary purpose of offering a theological and pastoral framework for campus ministry....It could be very useful as a reference work in a course teaching concepts of campus ministry.... A fine work with much to offer."

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